

Key weapon in the fight against cholera

A Cholera Treatment Centre (CTC) is a specialised isolation ward designed to manage and treat cholera patients and prevent the spread of the disease. In cholera outbreaks around the world, MSF rapidly sets up these centres to combat and contain infection.

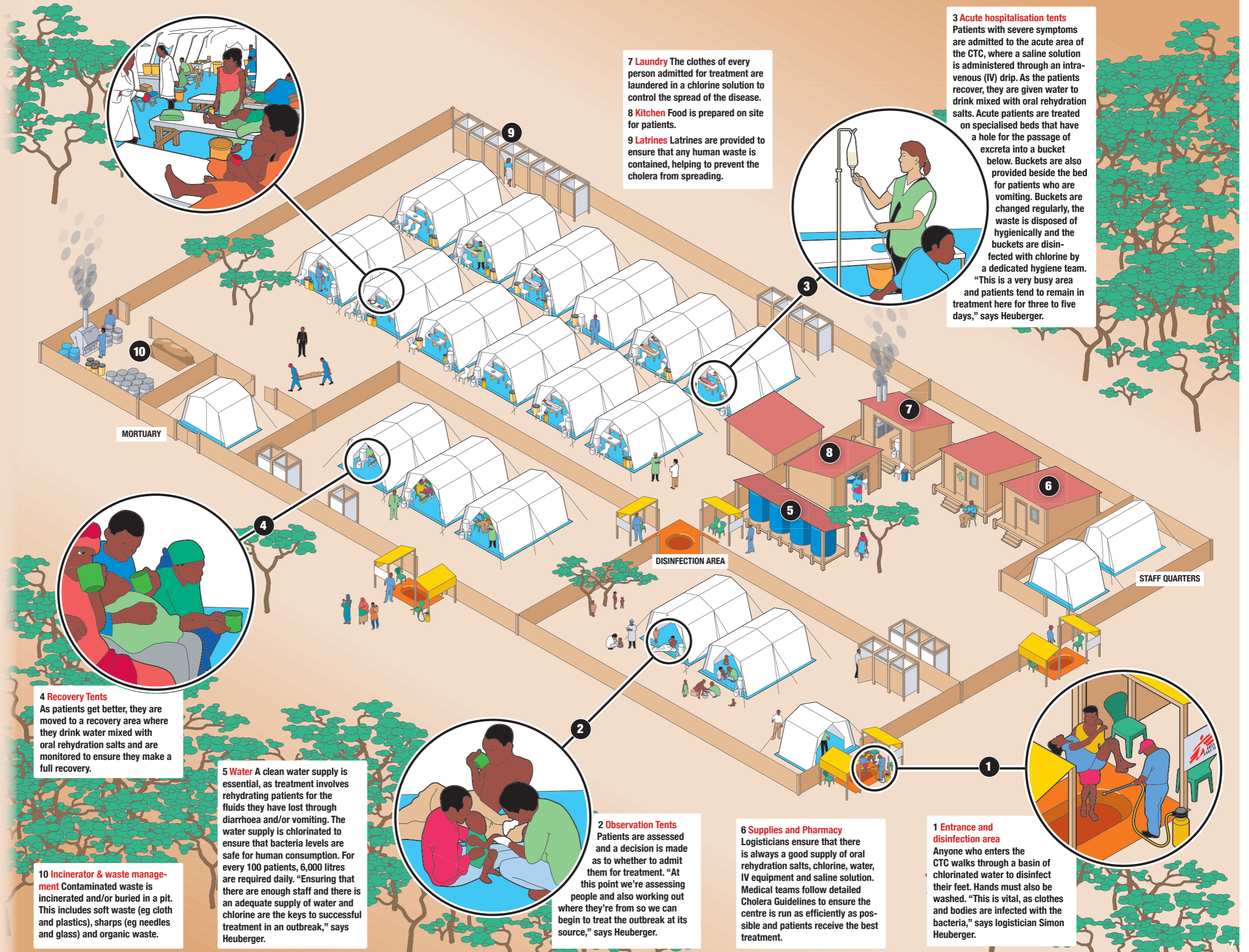
Treating cholera is a race against time. The onset of the disease is abrupt, with profuse diarrhoea and vomiting resulting in severe dehydration that can kill infected people within hours. Although it is an easily curable disease, it is vital that cases are detected and treated

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in a CTC as early as possible.

In the CTC, patients are given an oral rehydration solution that works to replace the massive amount of fluids and salts lost due to the disease. During this period, patients are isolated to prevent the further spread of infection.

In 2009, MSF treated 103,220 cholera cases around the world and in most outbreaks, was able to limit the fatality rate among patients to less than 1 percent. Since the cholera epidemic began in Haiti in late October 2010, MSF teams have treated more than 110,000 patients across the country.



4 Recovery Tents
As patients get better, they are moved to a recovery area where they drink water mixed with oral rehydration salts and are monitored to ensure they make a full recovery.

10 Incinerator & waste management
Contaminated waste is incinerated and/or buried in a pit. This includes soft waste (eg cloth and plastics), sharps (eg needles and glass) and organic waste.

5 Water
A clean water supply is essential, as treatment involves rehydrating patients for the fluids they have lost through diarrhoea and/or vomiting. The water supply is chlorinated to ensure that bacteria levels are safe for human consumption. For every 100 patients, 6,000 litres are required daily. "Ensuring that there are enough staff and there is an adequate supply of water and chlorine are the keys to successful treatment in an outbreak," says Heuberger.

2 Observation Tents
Patients are assessed and a decision is made as to whether to admit them for treatment. "At this point we're assessing people and also working out where they're from so we can begin to treat the outbreak at its source," says Heuberger.

7 Laundry
The clothes of every person admitted for treatment are laundered in a chlorine solution to control the spread of the disease.

8 Kitchen
Food is prepared on site for patients.

9 Latrines
Latrines are provided to ensure that any human waste is contained, helping to prevent the cholera from spreading.

6 Supplies and Pharmacy
Logisticians ensure that there is always a good supply of oral rehydration salts, chlorine, water, IV equipment and saline solution. Medical teams follow detailed Cholera Guidelines to ensure the centre is run as efficiently as possible and patients receive the best treatment.

1 Entrance and disinfection area
Anyone who enters the CTC walks through a basin of chlorinated water to disinfect their feet. Hands must also be washed. "This is vital, as clothes and bodies are infected with the bacteria," says logistician Simon Heuberger.

3 Acute hospitalisation tents
Patients with severe symptoms are admitted to the acute area of the CTC, where a saline solution is administered through an intravenous (IV) drip. As the patients recover, they are given water to drink mixed with oral rehydration salts. Acute patients are treated on specialised beds that have a hole for the passage of excreta into a bucket below. Buckets are also provided beside the bed for patients who are vomiting. Buckets are changed regularly, the waste is disposed of hygienically and the buckets are disinfected with chlorine by a dedicated hygiene team. "This is a very busy area and patients tend to remain in treatment here for three to five days," says Heuberger.